



# All About Stress

**Brought To You By**

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**Look through the chapters to see which of the different stress tips  
will help you.**

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## **What Is Stress? (And Why Is It So Bad For You?)**

Stress has almost become an unavoidable part of modern life. Unless you quit your job or drop out of school, cut all relationship ties, and decide to live in a cave out in the wilds, chances are you are going to have to deal with one kind of stress or another on a daily basis.

And a little stress isn't necessarily a bad thing. In fact, without it, most people wouldn't feel the urge to get things done, achieve new things, or accomplish their goals.

But it is when stress gets out of control that the real trouble begins.

### **What Is Stress Exactly?**

Stress is your body's way of dealing with the outside dangers and challenges life can throw your way.

If you are walking down a dark, deserted street, your body will release hormones and chemicals that will make you more alert to your surroundings, and ready to flee to safety at a moment's notice.

If you have an important project due in the morning, and you are going to have to stay up all night to finish it, the same chemicals and hormones will keep you awake and alert, and give you the extra boost you need to work faster.

In certain situations, a little stress is okay. But you can have too much of a good thing.

### **When Stress Gets Out of Control**

When you are dealing with one demand or challenge after another, it can leave your body in a high state of stress. And those chemicals and hormones your body releases to help you deal with challenging situations can actually be harmful in large, prolonged doses. And, as a result, you can experience all sorts of physical, mental, emotional, and behavioral problems.

Some of the physical symptoms can include headaches, chest pains, diarrhea, sleep disorders, skin breakouts, fatigue, and high blood pressure.

The psychological symptoms can include anxiety, irritability, depression, forgetfulness, and poor concentration.

Stress can also be blamed for many relationship problems. When you are feeling tense, anxious, or overwhelmed, you are much more likely to yell at

your spouse, snap at your children, demean your coworkers, or take offense at innocent comments made by friends. And all of this can put a strain on those important relationships.

So, what is stress? It is a condition that can affect every area of your life, from your physical health, to your relationships with friends and family, to your work life. That is why learning to manage stress is a critical part of leading a healthy, happy life.

## **3 Ways to Relieve Stress**

We all have to deal with stress. In fact, a day probably doesn't go by when you don't feel anxious, angry, annoyed, overworked, or just plain overwhelmed. This is why finding simple ways to relieve stress is so important.

You don't have to go into a dark room and meditate for an hour, or drop everything and run off to a tropical island, to relieve the tensions of your daily life. In fact, there are things you can do at any time, no matter where you happen to be, that can give you instant stress relief.

### **Slowly Count To Ten**

Yes, some problems can be stressful. But how you react to stressful situations is the key. If you immediately get worked up over every problem or challenge that pops up in your life, you're going to spend a lot of time feeling tense and anxious. But, if you can stay relatively calm and in control, stress won't be as much of an issue for you.

When something bad or unpleasant happens in your life, don't react immediately. Instead, take a moment and slowly count to ten. As you count, rate the stressor on a scale of 1 to 10.

Your boss yelled at you? On the scale of bad things that can happen on any given day, that's about a two.

You lost your keys? That's about a 4. Not an ideal situation, but one you can handle.

Counting to ten gives you time to really evaluate the stressful situation. Once you put things in perspective, you might find it's not worth stressing over.

## **Take Some Deep Breaths**

In a way, stress is a fear response. One thing that happens when you are afraid or in danger is your breathing becomes quick and shallow. And the same thing can happen when you're anxious about a busy day, or nervous about giving a speech. And this impaired breathing can actually make your stress and anxiety even worse.

So concentrate on taking slow breaths, breathing deep so that your stomach expands, then slowly letting the air out. This is a way of tricking

your body into thinking the stressor is gone, and you will start to actually feel more calm as a result.

## **Massage Your Temples**

When they are feeling stressed, some people instinctively reach up to massage their temples. And it's a good instinct to have.

Gently rubbing your temples in a circular motion is an acupressure technique that helps relax tense muscles, especially those in your shoulders and neck. And, as your muscles relax, some of your stress will drain away.

There are many ways to relieve stress. And, with these quick and easy techniques, you can ease tension, and help yourself feel calmer and more in control, no matter where you happen to be.

## **How Does Stress Affect Your Health**

We know how stress can affect us mentally and emotionally. It can make us feel anxious and overwhelmed. It can make our tempers short and cause us to feel depressed. But how does stress affect your health?

When you are feeling stressed, certain stress hormones, like adrenaline and cortisol, are released into your system. This is fine in short doses. It can even be beneficial. But if your stress is prolonged, and these hormones keep getting pumped into your symptoms, they can actually cause damage to your body and your health.

It's common knowledge that too much stress can negatively affect your blood pressure. But it can impact your health in other negative ways, too.

### **Your Immune System**

When you are under stress, your body might shut down or suppress some of your systems. This is its way of giving you fewer things to worry about. For example, many women in stressful situations might stop having a menstrual cycle for a month or two, or even longer.

Unfortunately, prolonged stress can also partially suppress your immune system, which can make you susceptible to illnesses and infections.

People who are stressed out often end up getting sick or run down. Which makes it even harder to deal with daily challenges, and makes them feel even more stressed.

## **Digestive Problems**

Digestive problems are common in those under extreme stress. Those feeling stressed shouldn't be surprised to find themselves suffering from diarrhea, heartburn, or indigestion.

## **Weight Gain**

People dealing with stressful situations, like a divorce or breakup, the loss of a loved one, or a job they hate, often find themselves eating more and putting on weight. Many often assume this is because people sometimes eat more to comfort themselves. But, while this can be true, there is also a physical reason for the weight gain.

Stress causes hormonal changes in the body. And these hormonal changes can actually increase your appetite. You eat more not just

because you are feeling sad, but because your body is telling you that you need to eat more.

## **Other Problems**

Stress can also cause other problems, like insomnia, fatigue, sexual dysfunction, and erratic mood swings. It can make it hard for you to concentrate at work, and even harder for you to remember important dates and appointments. It can also make skin conditions, like acne, eczema, and psoriasis even worse.

So how does stress affect your health? Potentially, it can affect it in all sorts of negative ways. That is why learning to manage and relieve your stress should be your top priority.

## **How To Deal With Stress: Do You Know How To Relax?**

It seems like everyone is trying to learn how to deal with stress. From work hassles, to family problems, to money issues, people's lives are filled with potential stressors.

One of the best ways to deal with stress is relaxing. Taking just 10 or 15 minute break away from your hectic life can do your mind and body a world of good.

But, surprisingly, many people don't seem to know how to relax effectively. They know how to take a short break away from the stresses of work, or running after hyperactive kids. But they don't know how to use that break to give them the most benefits.

So, how do you relax the right way? Here are some tips.

### **Let Go of the Tension**

If you have been on your feet all day, sitting down for five or ten minutes can be a huge relief. But if you are sitting in your chair as stiff as a board,

and already thinking about having to go back to work in a little bit, you aren't really relaxing.

When you sit down to take your break, forget about the work you will have to get back to once the break is over. Make a conscious effort to let go of the tension. Put your feet up, if you can. Relax those stiff muscles. You can even slouch in your seat if you want to.

A good way to relieve stress is by relaxing your body.

## **Don't Think**

Many people use their breaks to think. They think about all of the things they have to do after work, or once the kids are off to school. Or they think about how they will deal with the problem that came up before their break.

Typically, thinking about things like work-related problems or your busy schedule aren't very relaxing.

During your break, try occupying your mind with something that won't add to your stress. Read a romance novel or an entertainment magazine. Or spend the time playing with a stress relief toy.

## **Rethink Those Errands**

The purpose of a break is to give you some time to relax and reenergize, so you can face the rest of the day with renewed energy and pep.

However, if you spend your breaks running errands, you aren't giving yourself time to relax or reenergize.

So, before you spend your break running errands, reconsider. Are these things you absolutely have to do during your break, or can you do them at another time?

Learning how to deal with stress is critical. But things can get so hectic, some people feel almost guilty for taking a moment to relax. However, by doing so, you will actually make yourself better able to deal with the stresses of daily life.

## **Stress Relief Games: Play Your Stress Away**

Can stress relief games really help ease your feelings tension and anxiety?

Definitely.

It's true that stress is often caused by outside factors that we have no control over, like having to pay for a new water heater, or having to take up the slack for an absent coworker. But how we deal with those outside stressors can make things worse.

Many people dealing with stressful situations try to hold things in, keep it all together, and stay in control. But what they actually need is an outlet, a way to just let themselves go for a while and get everything out.

And that's where stress relief games can help.

### **Exercise**

Physical exercise is often a great way to deal with stress. Once you are in the pool swimming laps, you will soon forget about the problems at work.

And hitting a tennis ball for an hour or so is a great way to work out your frustrations.

People often feel better after they've done something fun and active for a little while.

Fun is the key. Doing a workout probably won't relieve as much stress as playing an actual game or sport, like basketball, would. If you are trying to relieve stress, make sure you are doing something you really enjoy.

## **Board and Parlor Games**

How many times have you been really stressed out about something? Then something happens to give you a good laugh, and whatever was bothering you doesn't seem so bad anymore.

There is truth to the saying that laughter is the best medicine, so playing funny board or parlor games is a great way to relieve stress.

It's hard not to laugh during a fun game of charades. And you can find games online that are guaranteed to tickle your funny bone.

## **Games That Occupy Your Mind**

One way to relieve your stress is to get your mind off of whatever is causing it. And playing intellectually stimulating games is a great way to do that.

There are plenty of games online that will occupy your mind and keep you from thinking about your troubles. Choose games that are challenging enough to hold your interest, but not so challenging they would cause you to feel frustrated.

If you like pencil puzzles, buy several puzzle books, along with a good supply of mechanical pens, and stash them around your home or office.

Jigsaw puzzles are also good stress relievers.

Stress relief games are a great way to ease your feelings of tension and anxiety. Whether it's engaging in physical activity, playing games online, or solving pencil puzzles, you are bound to find a game that will help you manage your stress.

## **Stress Relief Gifts: Give the Gift of Relaxation**

Trying to come up with the perfect gift to give to a friend or family member? One great option is giving stress relief gifts.

For most people, life is busy and hectic. We all feel like we have too much to do, and little time to do it. In fact, many of us are so busy doing things for others, we don't take the time to do things for ourselves.

By giving someone a gift designed to help relieve their stress, you encourage them to take some time to relax and pamper themselves.

Here are some great stress relievers you can give as gifts.

### **The Gift of Massage**

There's no denying the relaxing affects of a good massage. Sadly, it's something many people have never tried for themselves. So why not give them a gift that introduces them to this soothing experience.

Depending on where you live, you can find a local day spa that offers massages for as little as \$30. And many of them offer gift certificates.

Giving a gift certificate as a gift means the recipient can go for their massage at any time.

And why leave yourself out. You can go with them to the day spa, and make it a special, relaxing treat for both of you.

## **Stress Relief Toys**

Stress relief toys are designed to relax and occupy the mind. Because you are focused on the toy, you aren't thinking about whatever is causing you tension or anxiety. However, the toy itself isn't all that challenging, so it won't add to your stress.

You can find stress relief toys everywhere, from the Internet to the toy aisle at the nearest department store. Try to find a toy that suits the person you are giving it to. For example, if they like nature, give them a miniature herb garden. If they like puzzles, give them a Rubik's Cube, or a jigsaw puzzle.

## **Water Relaxation**

There are few things more relaxing than a long, warm bath in a dimly lit room. And you can give a gift that will make the experience even more relaxing and enjoyable.

You can either buy a bathing set that's already assembled, or you can put one together yourself. Buy a basket, and fill it with bath salts and oils, sponges, lotions, aromatherapy candles, and anything else you can think of. You can even include a CD of soothing music.

Life is busy and hectic for everyone. So, when looking for the perfect present, stress relief gifts should be at the top of your list. Giving someone the gift of relaxation is something you can be sure they will appreciate.

## **Stress Relief Toys: Do They Really Work?**

Are you feeling stressed? If you go to school, have a job, are raising a family, are caring for a sick or elderly relative, or have a credit card debt, your answer is probably a definite yes. And, if you are looking for ways to relieve your feelings of tension and anxiety, stress relief toys just might be the solution.

Stress has been called a modern day epidemic. Everyone seems to be suffering from this problem for one reason or another. So it's no surprise that products designed to help combat this condition have become a major industry. In fact, stress relief toys are becoming more popular every day.

But do they really work?

### **What Do These Toys Do?**

Despite the name, stress toys aren't simply designed for people to play and have fun with. They are actually meant to serve many purposes.

For one thing, they occupy your mind. It's very easy to tell someone to sit down and relax. But, if you are feeling tense or anxious about something, it

probably won't be long before you start thinking about what has you stressed in the first place.

However, if you're bouncing a rubber ball, or playing with a yoyo, your mind will be on that rather than what is causing your anxiety.

But, while the toy occupies your mind, it shouldn't require much mental effort. So, while you are thinking about what you're doing, you're thinking about it in a relaxed way.

### **They Should Be Fun and Enjoyable**

There are a lot of stress toys that say they can help relieve your stress. But if you don't enjoy it enough to use them, or you don't have fun with them, you won't get much benefit from them.

Some people find keeping a little herb garden in their kitchen or office relaxing. Taking a minute or two away from their busy day to care for the herbs can help calm their frazzled nerves. However, if you don't care much for gardening or herbs, you probably won't have much interest in caring for an herb garden. So it will sit there, untouched, and won't do you much good.

Do you like Rubik's Cubes? Some people find them to be great stress relievers. And they can be effective, if you can stay calm and relaxed while

doing them. However, if trying to solve these puzzles makes you feel frustrated, and has you gritting your teeth in annoyance, it probably isn't the right stress reliever for you.

Stress relief toys do work. But only if you choose the right kind of toy. One that will occupy your mind, help you relax, and help you forget about the stresses of the day.

## **Herbal Stress Relief: Natural Solutions**

It seems like just about everyone is leading busy, hectic lives. Now, more than ever, people are looking for ways to deal with stress. And, for many, herbal stress relief is the answer they have been looking for.

Using herbal remedies and treatments to deal with illnesses and ailments has become very popular in the last few years. People have come to value natural solutions over chemical or artificial ones. And herbal remedies are the ultimate, natural solution for whatever is ailing you.

There are two herbs that are known, and have been proven, to be effective against stress. They are ginseng and kava kava.

### **The Stress Relieving Power of Ginseng**

When it comes to stress, it's not so much the stressful situation you have to deal with that are the problem, but how you react to them.

When you are faced with a stressful situation, and you react to it with fear, anxiety, or tension, your adrenal gland starts to pump out stress hormones. These hormones are fine in small doses. But, if these hormones are

pumping through your system for a prolonged period of time, they can actually weaken your immune system, raise your blood pressure, put strain on your heart, and cause you to feel extreme fatigue.

Ginseng helps make your reaction to stressful situations less intense, so you to stay more calm and in control. The result is a reduction in the amount of stress hormones that are released into your system.

If you are already experiencing the effects of stress, like fatigue or poor concentration, ginseng can help with that, too. This herb can help boost your energy, as well as improving your mental alertness. Ginseng can also help improve your overall mood and sense of well being.

### **Fight Stress with Kava Kava**

If you are feeling really stressed, nervous, or anxious, taking some kava kava could have you feeling calmer and more relaxed in as little as half an hour.

Like ginseng, kava kava can help to reduce your reaction to a stressful situation. So, if you are nervous about giving a speech, taking this herb can help to calm you down, and stay calm and in control through your presentation.

Kava kava can also help soothe frazzled nerves and relax tense muscles. It is the perfect herb to have on hand after a busy day at work. Not only will kava kava help you relax, it will also improve your mood.

There are many good techniques you can use to manage stress. But, if you are looking for herbal stress relief, ginseng and kava kava are the perfect places to start.

## **What Are the Major Causes Of Stress? (And How Can You Control Them?)**

Stress is an unfortunate fact of life. And some of the major causes of stress (like rush hour traffic) just can't be avoided.

Do you have a job? Then you have to deal with getting reports done on time, pleasing the boss, or getting along with unpleasant coworkers.

Do you go to school? Then you have to deal with getting doing school work, peer pressure, and maybe holding down a part time job so you will have spending money.

And family can be pretty stressful too. You have to take care of the kids, stay on top of everyone's schedules, and keep promises you made to relatives.

Yes, life is filled with stressers. But there are some major causes of stress that we can control.

### **Too Many Commitments**

You wake up in the morning, think about your day, and want to go right back to bed. Why? Because you just remembered the ten or twelve things you have to do today. And many of those things are commitments you made to other people, even though you knew you already had too much on your plate.

A lot of stress comes from making too many commitments, and promising to take on more than you have time for.

This is why learning to say "No," is an important part of managing stress. Learn not to take on more than you can handle at any given time.

## **Money Troubles**

Money troubles are a major cause of stress. In fact, money problems are often given as one of the major reasons divorcing couples are splitting up.

How much time do you spend worrying about your debt? Does thinking about the credit card bills that will be arriving in the next few weeks keep you awake at night? If so, this is a problem you need to deal with.

Of course, taking care of a large debt can be easier said than done. But, sometimes, just taking steps to deal with your debt (like seeing a debt counselor) can be enough to dramatically decrease your financial stress.

## **Lack of Down Time**

Busy people who take time out to relax and unwind are often less stressed than those who are just as busy, and do the exact same amount of work, but don't take any down time.

When your life is busy, and there are dozens of things you need to do, taking a break can almost make you feel guilty. But taking breaks will actually help you get more done, and feel better while you're doing it.

Having a completely stress free existence is probably out of reach. But these are just a few of the things you can do to take control of, and drastically reduce, some of the major causes of stress in your life.

## **Stress Tips: 3 Ways to Simplify Your Daily Life**

You are feeling completely stressed out. Work demands, a hectic family life, commitments you have made to friends and relatives. There are so many things you have to do, and it just doesn't seem like there are enough hours in the day to do it all. You need a few quick stress tips to help you regain control.

Well, you are in luck. Here are three quick and easy things you can do to restore some of the order to your busy, frantic life.

### **What Do You Really Need To Do?**

One of the major causes of stress is having too much to do and not enough time to do it. Finding ways to either eliminate some of the unnecessary To-Dos from your life, or at least make them easier, can take a lot of the pressure off of you.

Does rushing home to make dinner for your family make the hours after you get off work even more hectic? Instead, why not make a week's worth of dinners over the weekend and put them in the fridge. After work, all you have to do is heat them up.

Think about the things you do every day, and try to eliminate or simplify as much of it as you can.

## **Learn To Delegate**

There are some things on your daily To-Do list that you simply can't skip or pass up on. These things must get done.

But that doesn't necessarily mean you have to be the one to do them.

Think about the things you do every day that could be could be done by someone besides you. Who else could you ask to do them instead?

## **It's Okay to Back Out**

Some of us find it hard to say no. You might worry that, if someone asks you to do something, and you refuse, they will get mad at you. Or they'll decide you aren't the nice guy they thought you were.

But agreeing to take on extra commitments when you know you already have more than enough on your plate can be a major cause of stress. So learn to say no without feeling guilty about it.

If you have already agreed to do something, but have come to realize that this added commitment is just too much for you to handle right now, it is okay for you to back out. Go to the person you made the commitment to, and explain the situation. You can even try to help find someone to take your place. Chances are, they will understand.

Feeling overwhelmed by your hectic life? These three quick stress tips will help you decrease some of your daily burdens, and regain some of the peace and calm you have lost.

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